

2017 Section B Q5

(a) Outline the variations that exist in marriages today.

Same Sex Marriage: as a result of the Marriage Act 2015, people in Ireland are now free to marry people of either gender. This has led to an increase of same sex marriages.

Civil Ceremony: marriages are now commonly taking place in registry offices or hotels rather than in a church. This is as a result of the Catholic Church having less of an influence today as it did in Ireland in the past.

Age: In Ireland, the legal age for marriage is 18. This age varies in countries across the world. For example, in Sudan, the legal age to marry is 10. These different laws across the world allows for many variations in marriage.

Number of Spouses: depending on the culture, marriages may be monogamous or polygamous. Polygamy is a form of marriage that involves having more than one partner at a time. There are two types: polygyny and polyandry. This allows for many variations of marriage that can be seen in communities all over the world e.g. polyandry is very common in the Tibetan community.

(b) Discuss the benefits of pre-marriage courses for couples preparing for marriage.

Couples can develop good communication skills so they can understand each other better. This allows partners to feel heard and understood which prevents conflict.

A pre-marriage course provides couples with practical advice that they can put into use in their daily lives. These courses offer budgeting advice which is an essential skill to have and it prepares the couple for marriage while teaching them how to deal with any financial issues that may arise during the marriage.

It allows to couple to discuss what they want to get from the marriage e.g. going travelling or having children. This allows the couple to get to know each other better and see if they are both on the same page with regards to what they want from the marriage.

It sets realistic expectations of marriage. They can discuss the problems that may occur and discuss how they can be sorted e.g. does one partner expect the other to stay at home, mind the children and clean the house? These topics can be discussed openly to prevent future conflict.

(c) Evaluate each of the following options available to couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage: • marriage counselling • family mediation • legal separation.

Marriage Counselling

This is an option for those who are experiencing difficulty in their marriage. It is provided by ACCORD and Relationships Ireland. It is a free service. It will only be successful if both spouses are serious about resolving the issue and if the problems are not too far advanced. It is carried out by an impartial counsellor.

Family Mediation

A service provided for free through the state funded family mediation service to couples who have decided to separate or divorce. Families will discuss aspects of the future and sort out childcare and the division of finances. However, it is not legally binding so families will have to get a solicitor to draw up a deed of separation.

Legal Separation

The marriage has ended at this point. This is a legally binding, written contract between partners setting out future rights and duties. A trained mediator can help the couple settle the terms e.g. who will live in the family home. A deed of separation is drawn up by a solicitor to make it legally binding.